THE EVENING FIRE-SIDE;

OR

Literary Miscellany.

VOL. II.] *PHILADELPHIA, June* 21, 1806. [No. 25.

The price of the Evening Fire-side is three dollars per annum.

For the Evening Fire-side.

THE PHILANTHROPIST: NO. XVI.

How many, once in fortune's lap high fed,
Solicit the cold hand of Charity!
To shock us more, solicit it in vain.

YOUNG.

I hope that nothing I have ſaid on the ſubject of *almſgiving*, will draw upon me the cenſure of being an encourager of *impoſtors*, or an advocate for the *mendicant tribe*, who have encreaſed among us lately to an alarming extent. This is an evil that calls loudly for more potent remedies than the eſſays of the *Philanthropiſt*; remedies which are only to be hoped for from legiſlative interference, which can only be adminiſtered by lawgivers with a probability of ſucceſs. While things are as they are; as the means of relief which are provided are ſo inſufficient, under the preſent imperfect ſyſtem, to ſatisfy the demands of neceſſity. Is it not more generous, more noble, more *philanthropic*, to obey the impulſe of the moment, and hand out the *poor pittance*, ſolicited by a fellow being, than to conjure up from the tales we have heard of impoſtors, a thouſand ſuſpicions, which probably upon examination would prove unjuſt.

I could enumerate ſome inſtances of impoſture, as well calculated to damp the ardour of a benevolent heart, as thoſe which produced ſuch a wonderful change in the opinions and conduct of HORTENSIOUS.

One perhaps I may mention without hazarding the diſpleaſure of my readers, or impoſing on their patience.

A man who had eſtabliſhed his reputation for lying; who was known to be eminently qualified for petty deceptions, came to a friend of mine one morning with ſymptoms of unuſual diſtreſs; Mr. ——, ſaid the ſuppliant, I am an unfortunate ſufferer: laſt night my houſe and every thing it contained, (except my wife and children) were conſumed by fire. In ſaving *them*, I have diſqualified myſelf for labour, as you may ſee:—(ſhewing his right hand and arm which appeared to be pitiably ſcorched.) In this helpleſs ſituation, penyleſs and naked, I knew of no one to apply to but you, for relief. The manifeſt ſincerity of his ſorrow; his diſabled arm, which was a ſtill more powerful witneſs in his favour, with an invitation to accompany him to the ſcene of diſaſter, counteracted the ſuſpicions which a previous knowledge of his character naturally excited.—By the liberality of my friend, and ſome of his acquaintances, thirty or forty dollars were immediately raiſed, and a contribution levied upon the half-worn clothes of the neighbouring children for the benefit of the unfortunate man, and his wretched family.

Whether ſuſpicions were awakened by the thanks of the *poor man's* landlord, who received part of the money for a quarter's rent, or by ſome other cauſe, I do not remember; *Le pauvre miſerable*, was, however cited to appear before his benefactors, to anſwer to the charges brought againſt him. The moſt ſatisfactory mode of juſtification that could be thought of, was for him to ſhew them the ruins of the houſe that had been conſumed. To this he cheerfully agreed: and immediately ſet out with one of the company (after the moſt ſolemn aſſurances of the truth of what he had told them) in queſt of the tottering walls of his late manſion, the ſight of which was to clear up his character, and replace him in that reſpectable ſituation from whence their ſuſpicions had degraded him.

After proceeding to the weſtern extremity of the city, the companion of our hero enquired how much further they had to go. I am going, replied he (ſmiling) to the houſe of a relation, about three miles over Schuylkill, and ſhall be proud of your company, if you will condeſcend to do me that honour. Shocked at the wretch's depravity, and indignant at his unparalleled ingratitude and effrontery, the gentleman warmly remonſtrated againſt his conduct. The impoſtor remained unmoved.—And when he was aſked how he could thus deliberately lie, and whether he never expected to be called to account for ſuch unheard-of wickedneſs? calmly replied, that God Almighty had forgiven him for two lies before, and he confidently hoped would forgive him for the third. I was, continued he, really in diſtreſs: your reward for relieving that diſtreſs will be the ſame as if my houſe had been burnt. Here the gentleman's equanimity deſerted him: and having, by giving vent to his feelings, raiſed the paſſions of his companion to a higher key than his own, ſoon diſcovered that his perſonal ſafety depended upon a precipitate retreat.

Though many facts of this kind come to our knowledge, ought they to cloſe the ears of charity againſt the cries of the wretched? As it is impoſſible at all times to diſcriminate impoſtors from true objects of commiſeration, is it not better that *ten undeſerving applicants* ſhould receive our bounty, than that one real child of miſery and want ſhould ſuffer the penalty which ought only to be inflicted on impoſtors.

P. S. *To the Editors.*

GENTLEMEN,

Having inſerted in your paper ſeveral pieces under my aſſumed name, which I had no knowledge of till I ſaw them in print; ſome of them containing ſentiments to which I could not ſubſcribe, I take the liberty of requeſting you to avoid a repetition of ſaid conduct, as it approches pretty near to what I call miſdemeanor. The one on ſwearing I moſt ſolemnly diſclaim. Having never (in my own opinion) done ſuch notorious injuſtice to my ſubject and the king's engliſh at one and the ſame time. This is a new way (as the ſaying is) of killing two birds with one ſtone.

To Correſpondents.

Eſſays addreſſed to the PHILANTHROPIST, though containing ſentiments to which

he cannot subscribe, may be introduced with propriety. I should be pleased to hear often from some of my correspondents, particularly SELINA and HORTENTIOUS. Him, I think I have discovered to be the kinsman of a *Matron*. Though the latter upbraids me with apathy towards the fairest part of the creation, and the former calls in question the propriety of discarding the "cold-pausing-caution" of *Dame Prudence*, when the heart is expanded by benevolence at the sight of a miserable object asking charity.

These are correspondents from whom I confidently hope to receive assistance in future. Although we differ in opinion on matters of little importance, we have doubtless the same object in view—the good of society at large. It would not be surprising, if the sprightliness of SELINA, and the prudence of HORTENTIOUS, should make something of me yet, notwithstanding my essays, I understand are thought to be a little soporific in their tendency.

X.

FOR THE EVENING FIRE-SIDE.

Stanzas to the hills on York-Island, bordering on the North River.

Ye wildly-towering shrub-crown'd hills,
Whose base, majestic Hudson laves;
From whence a thousand nameless rills,
Convey your tribute to his waves.

How oft, when Fancy rules the hour,
I paint your wild gigantic forms!
I see the clouds around you low'r,
I hear the roaring of your storms!

Or when the purple glowing west,
With peerless radiance greets the eye;
Receiving in its golden breast,
The glorious regent of the sky.

I see with rural pleasures crown'd,
A pair with love and affluence bless'd;
Whom anxious Care has never found,
By Fortune's fav'ring power caress'd.

With arms entwin'd, I see them stray,
The groves, that deck your sides, among;
When to the parting beam of day,
The robin pours his artless song.

Or on some rural seat reclin'd;
Observant of the passing sail;
The streamer, fluttering in the wind,
The waters ruffled by the gale.

While labouring on the rugged rock,
A patient wight pursues his toil;
The neighbouring groves confess the shock,
His ponderous hammer shakes the soil.

In the rough bowels of the earth
He seeks the deep-concealed spring,
To give the hidden treasure birth,
He toils while hills and vallies ring.

But first with *mystic rod* around,
With measured step the master goes;
To find the favour'd space of ground,
Where the pure lymph in secret flows.

As reverend priests, in days of yore,
With holy pomp and solemn pace,
The symbols of religion bore,
The fountains of celestial grace.

With well pois'd rod he moves along,
At length the mystic twig descends:—
'Tis there, the boiling waters throng—
'Tis there the grave procession ends.

Yet stubborn Pride, belief denies,
Nor will he make a vain essay;
But the obdurate rock defies,
And through its barriers holds his way.

Ye hills, that rise o'er Hudson's wave!—
Ye groves that deck the sylvan scene!
In vain your rural joys I crave;
Hills, rocks and forests intervene.

But may the Genius, who presides,
O'er your wild scenes, your cliffs, your vales;
Who dwells upon your shrub-crown'd sides,
And flings rude music to the gales,

Still bless with happiness and peace,
And love's best gifts the worthy pair,
Their joys with every morn increase,
And make them his "peculiar care."

So shall the early smile of spring,
With vernal flowers your sides adorn;
So shall your echoing forests ring,
With music of the opening morn.

LYRICUS.

For the Evening Fire-side.

TO PHILETUS.

How gratifying would it be to the benevolent mind, to see the perpetrators of vice refrain from their evil ways! How pleasing the reflection to him who can say, my efforts have effected this. But in order to convince men of their follies, or reclaim them from the vices of the world, it is necessary that we express our ideas in an intelligent and precise manner. Struck with the good intent of your essay, published in the 23d No. I had to regret that the style was by no means adequate to the undertaking. Accordingly, I have taken the liberty of exposing some of the many inaccuracies contained in that essay. Not noticing each particular error, I shall examine only the following quotation, in which, as if conscious of an attack, the inaccuracies would seem to have flocked together, the better to resist it.—"But all will remain equally distant from the object of their wishes, w suppose *it* to be the necessary *result* of a *acquirements* whatever, short of the *regulation* of their desires and passions. would be *derogatory to* the justice and be volence of the Deity to conclude, that placing mankind in different situations, a bestowing on them in different degrees, t *capacity* of *obtaining* either wealth, titles, distinctions, he had made a primary diffe ence in their means of enjoyment."

In the first place, then, "all will rem equally distant from the object of th wishes who suppose *it*:"—suppose wha The *acquisition* of *happiness*," which is, p marily, the antecedent to *it* and standing the first period of the essay. Well th you say, they will all be disappointed w suppose the *acquisition* of happiness, to the necessary *result* of any *acquirements* wh ever, short of the *regulation* of their fires and passions. Here you make not ly *a regulation* to be *acquirements*, but wise make the *acquisition*, or obtaining happiness, to be the *result* of a *regula* But permit me to tell you, that although our acquirements we may be said to regu our conduct; yet, a *regulation* cannot said to be an *acquirement*, till *cause* and *fects* are proven to be one. You next "It would be *derogatory to* the justice benevolence of the Deity," &c. &c. Me ing it would be *derogating from* the justice, as *derogatory* is but an adjective, and can express an action; and we *add to*; we *take from*. In the same sentence speak of *bestowing* the *capacity* of *obtain* &c. Bestowing relates more strictly to tions between ourselves; and when speak of *capacity*, as applied to the mind man, we say he is endowed with a *capa* of *receiving*: but when we speak of obt ing, we say he is of ability to obtain, A piece of clay has a capacity of receiv any impression we choose to imprint on but no one will say it has the capacity of taining that impression. Hoping you pay more attention to your style in future bid you adieu.

OBSERVER.

ECLIPSE.

[As some account respecting the Ecl which took place on the 16th inst. may expected by our readers, we have dr up the following short sketch of it. sufficient to mention that the different st of it corresponded very nearly with

evious calculations publiſhed in the Al-
anacs, and in many of the public papers.
he morning was pleaſant but not without
ouds, the atmoſphere however became tole-
bly clear, but not quite ſo much ſo as could
ve been deſired. The light gradually
miniſhed until it became nearly as dark as
uſually is in a clear ſky half an hour after
e ſetting of the ſun. There was a very
nſible change in the air; it became cooler;
d the thermometer fell four degrees.—
was remarkable as the light faded away,
t the priſmatic colours were obſerved to
nge the edges of objects; and on the
vements were ſeen innumerable repreſen-
ions of the eclipſe in all its ſtages, where
e ſun happened to ſhine through trees.
e Planet Venus was apparent nearly one
ur to the naked eye, but no other ſtars
re obſervable even with glaſſes. Buſi-
s was ſuſpended, and the ſtreets were
ed with inhabitants, many *anxiouſly* view-
the appearance and progreſs of this
blime phenomenon. Accounts from
w York nearly coincide with the forego-
, excepting that more ſtars became viſi-
.]

A writer in the Norwich True Republi-
n, after announcing the approach of this
lipſe, makes the ſubſequent reflections:

The years 1805 and 1806, ſeem to be
blete with extraordinary events in the
yſical world. The Congreſs of planets
our ſyſtem, laſt October, was a pheno-
enon that has not happened for many
ars, and from the anomalous motions of
e planets, it is preſumed (for we have
de no calculations on the ſubject) that
e ſame phenomenon will not take place a-
in for many ages to come. That diſturban-
are cauſed in the planets motions when
y are congregated in the ſame quarter
the Heavens, by their mutual and ap-
oximate attractions, is a demonſtrable
t and an acknowledged principle in Aſ-
nomical ſcience. But what particular
nſequences follow from ſuch relative af-
ctions, is not at preſent, within the pro-
nce of human intellect to determine. One
ng, however, appears to be certain, that
r Atmoſphere has undergone great and
portant changes within the laſt two years.
e extraordinary viciſſitudes in the ſeaſons
t have occurred in this ſhort period,
pear to be without a parallel in Meteoro-
gical hiſtory, and ſtrongly argues the in-
vention of ſome new phyſical agency
hich has cauſed a variation in the former
dinary courſe of atmoſpherical phenome-
. But our ſhort ſtay here, and the want of authentic obſervations made by others in former ages, precludes us from forming any correct opinion of thoſe changes, and even renders all conjecture on a ſubject of ſuch magnitude, hazardous. It is perhaps, in this reſpect only, that we have reaſon to regret the ſhortneſs of human life.

The phenomena of Eclipſes, furniſh a ſtrong philoſophical argument in favour of the non-eternity of the world. However ſceptical we may be with reſpect to the impoſing evidence of certain human dogmas, there is ſomething of divinity in the force of mathematical truth that cannot be denied. It is juſtly ſtyled the perfection of our reaſon. The time of commencement or end of a viſible Eclipſe can be determined by obſervation, beyond a poſſibility of being miſtaken. Therefore, if the motion of the planets in their orbits remained the ſame, the principles on which are founded the calculations of their various aſpects, which give them to a degree of exactneſs, ſurpaſſing the acuteneſs of our ſenſes, for any time within an age would likewiſe give the ſame thing with equal accuracy, for any however remote a period. But it is found that the calculations of ancient Eclipſes do not agree with the obſervations of them. This is cauſed by a ſmall but conſtant decreaſe of the year, and a gradual contraction of the Moon's orbit; that is, nice obſervers have diſcovered that the year is not quite ſo long as formerly, and the ſame thing is obſervable with reſpect to the Lunar period. It is alſo well known that the planets do not move in ſpace void of reſiſtance, but in regions of light and ether which are material ſubſtances that form a reſiſting medium, that conſtantly tends to leſſen the projectile force of the planets and the obliquity of their orbits, whilſt the power of gravity, inſtead of being weakened, is increaſed by this diminution of the projectile force.

Hence it is manifeſt, that if the motions of the planets in their orbits are to be wholly regulated by the phyſical combination of centripetal and centrifugal forces, which at preſent preſerves the regularity and harmony of the univerſe, thoſe planets muſt in time fall to the centre of their attractions, unleſs the Almighty Architect who created them ſhould give them an additional projectile force. What right we have to expect ſuch an extra interpoſition in the general laws of nature, the ignorant and unlearned are as competent to decide as the greateſt Philoſopher. And though this point may never be ſatisfactorily anſwered, yet we may reſt aſſured, that our preſent ſyſtem will laſt as long as was intended by HIM who framed it: and we have no more reaſon to find fault with the CREATOR for making our world periſhable, than we have becauſe he has made man mortal!

For the Evening Fire-side.

The following particulars relative to the caterpillar and its ravages, are extracted from a letter juſt received, dated

"*Baltimore, June 10th*, 1806."

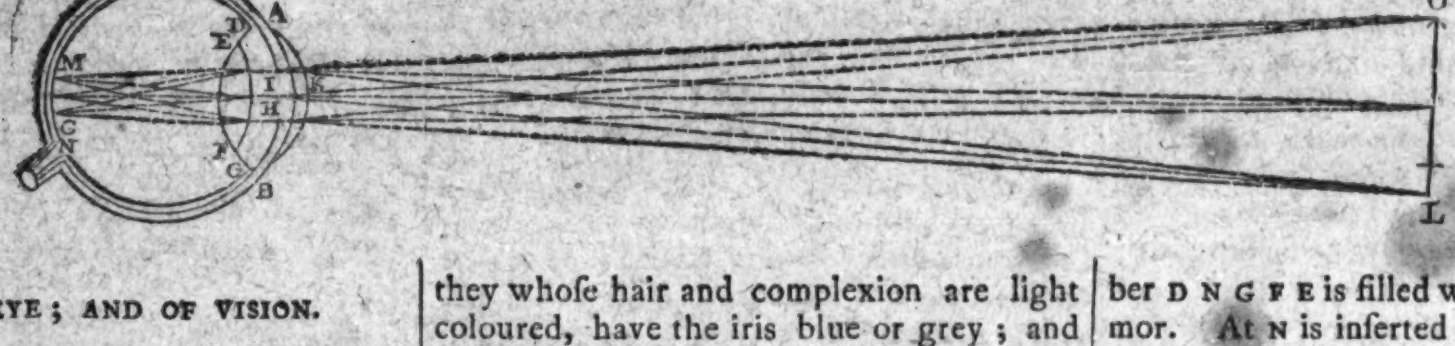
"I have this moment returned from a viſit to a rice field in the neighbourhood of this city, which the worm (no doubt thou haſt heard of) has committed its ravages upon. This inſect has made its appearance in North-Carolina, Virginia, and lately in this ſtate."

"The worm is from 3-4 to 1 1-2 inches long, and has much of the appearance of a caterpillar in ſhape and motion, but very different in colour, being ſtreaked with black along the back.

"I am lead to believe they generate in the head of wheat or rye, from diſcovering them in a very young ſtate incloſed among the grain: but they do not begin their ravages while there, nor do they as yet injure it; but ſtrip the ſtock of its leaves, and the head of its beard and chaff, and in ſome inſtances I am told have cut the head from the ſtalk; but this was not the caſe with the field I examined. From this circumſtance I am willing to hope, the damages to the grain may not be ſo fatal as their alarming appearance ſeemed to predict. They make their firſt appearance in great numbers, and deſtroy the graſs wholly. The ground over which they have paſſed has the appearance of having been burnt.

"The occaſional appearance and diſappearance of ſome claſſes of inſects, naturally leads the mind to ſerious contemplation. At times, we have, as it were, a new creation ſtart inſtantly into birth—anon they are no more. "A puny inſect ſhivering in the breeze,"----but capable, under divine direction, to cut off from lordly man his faireſt hopes and fineſt proſpects, as in a moment. Nor let any ſuppoſe himſelf exempt from ſuch a common calamity, ſhould it pleaſe HIM in whoſe hands, are all the immenſe reſources of nature to viſit it upon us; for he could as effectually deſtroy the earth and its inhabitants by a locuſt or caterpillar, as by a deluge."

A Figure of the Human Eye.



OF THE EYE; AND OF VISION.

If the conſtruction of the univerſe were not ſo evident a proof of the exiſtence of a ſupremely wiſe and benevolent Creator, as to render particular arguments unneceſſary, the ſtructure of the eye might be offered as one, by no means of the leaſt. This inſtance, among numberleſs others, demonſtrating that the beſt performances of art are infinitely ſhort of thoſe which are continually produced by the divine mechanic.

Though the apparatus, by which the eye is preſerved and kept in a ſtate proper for the quick motion and accurate direction towards the object to be viewed, is well worth attention and remark; yet, as it does not immediately come under our notice as illuſtrative of the principles of optics, we ſhall conſider only the globe of the eye, or organ by which viſion is performed.

The eye is compoſed of ſeveral tunics or integuments, one within the other, and is filled within with tranſparent humours of different refractive denſities. The external tunic called the ſclerotica, is white on the anterior part, except a circular portion immediately in front, which is tranſparent, and more convex than the reſt of the eye: this tranſparent part is called the cornea. Immediately adherent to the ſclerotica within, is the choroides, or uvea, which, at the circumference of the cornea, becomes the iris, being expanded over great part of its ſurface, though not contiguous to it. The iris is compoſed of two kinds of muſcular fibres; the one ſort tend like the radii of a circle towards its center, and the others form a number of concentric circles round the ſame center. The central part of the iris is perforated, and the orifice, which is called the pupil, is of no conſtant magnitude; for, when a very luminous object is viewed, the circular fibres of the iris contract, and diminiſh its orifice; and on the other hand, when objects are dark and obſcure, the radial fibres of the iris contract, and enlarge the pupil ſo as to admit a greater quantity of light into the eye. The iris is variouſly coloured in different perſons, but according to no certain rule: in general, they whoſe hair and complexion are light coloured, have the iris blue or grey; and on the contrary, thoſe whoſe hair and complexion are dark, have the iris of a deep brown. But what ſpecific difference this may occaſion in the ſenſe, or whether any at all, is not diſcoverable. Within the uvea is another membrane, which at the circumference of the cornea becomes fibrous, and is called the ligamentum ciliare. This ligament is attached to the circumference of a double convex lens, whoſe axis correſponds with the center of the pupil; and which, by means of the fibres, can be altered in a ſmall degree in poſition, and perhaps in figure. The lens is termed the cryſtalline humor; and is included in a very ſtrong and tranſparent membrane, called the arachnoides. Between the cryſtalline humor and the cornea is contained a clear tranſparent fluid, called the aqueous humor; and between the cryſtalline humor and the poſterior part or bottom of the eye is included another clear tranſparent fluid, which is termed the vitreous humor. The refractive denſity of the cryſtalline is greater than thoſe of the humors that ſurround it. On the ſide next to the noſe a nerve is inſerted in the bottom of each eye, about twenty-five degrees from the axis of the cryſtalline, which, after entering the eye, is ſpread into an exceeding fine coat of network, termed the retina. Laſtly; a very black mucus or ſlime is ſpread over all the internal parts of the eye, that are not tranſparent, except the anterior part of the iris, which, as before obſerved, is coloured.

In the figure, the three concentric circles A B C repreſent the coats of the eye. The external coat, or ſclerotica, is tranſparent, and more convex between A and B, A K B being the cornea. The ſecond tunic, or uvea, is fibrous between D and I, and between G and H, and is the recalled the iris; the hole I H is the pupil. The third coat becomes fibrous between D and E, and between G and F, being there called the ligamentum ciliare, and is attached to the circumference of the lens or cryſtalline humor E F. The cavity or chamber A E F B is filled with the aqueous humor, and the chamber D N G F E is filled with the vitreous humor. At N is inſerted the optic nerve, the expanſion of which, over the internal ſurface D N G, is the retina.

The manner in which the eye acts upon the rays of light may be thus explained. Let O L repreſent an object, and ſuppoſe a pencil of light to proceed from O, and enter the eye; then, becauſe the cornea is a convex concave lens, whoſe convexity is greateſt, the rays will be rendered more convergent in paſſing through it; and if the cryſtalline be properly formed, they will be refracted by it into a focus at C on the retina. The ſame will happen to the pencil which proceeds from L, whoſe focus will be M; and the foci of the intermediate points will be between M and C: conſequently an inverted picture or image will be formed on the retina, and ſenſation be produced by the action of the light on the expanſion of the optic nerve, which from thence is conveyed to the ſenſorium. And that the parts of the eye are adapted to produce ſuch an image, appears likewiſe from experiment: for if the tunica ſclerotica be carefully taken away from the back of the eye of any animal, the inverted picture of external objects may be ſeen on the thin membranes which remain. Neither is the invertion of the image any obſtacle to the mind's conceiving that the object is erect; for a focus at M may be conſidered as the indication of the exiſtence of a radiant point at L, and a focus at C may indicate the exiſtence of a radiant point at O; and ſo of others, the mind contemplating the object itſelf, and not the image; beſides which, we have notions reſpecting poſitions that are not derived from the ſight, whence we judge whether a wall is perpendicular or a plain level, &c. Theſe notions are derived from a perception of the direction in which gravity conſtantly acts; to which direction we always refer. Whence it happens, that though the poſition of the eye be ever ſo much changed, the idea of the poſition of objects in view remains unaltered. For example; if an obſerver view an upright pole or ſtaff, the image of the pole on the retina will be in a line at right angles to the opening of

the eyelids, provided he holds his head upright; but if he vary the position of his head, the image will be formed in a different position, and upon a different part of the retina: notwithstanding which, he constantly imagines the pole to be erect and unaltered. Because the foci of rays that differ in divergence are found at different distances from the lens, those which diverge less coming to a focus sooner than those which diverge more, it is necessary that the eye should be adapted so as to act upon the rays that arrive from points at various distances, and to bring them to a focus upon the retina. The natural structure of the eye is such, that parallel rays have their focus on the retina; and when the proximity of any object causes its rays to fall with a greater divergency, the pupil of the eye contracts and excludes the most divergent rays, at the same time that the crystalline is brought forward, and perhaps rendered more convex by means of the ligamentum ciliare, by which provisions the focus still falls on the retina. This adjustment of the eye to the distances of objects, gives the reason why we cannot view a near and a distant object at the same time; for, if a hair be held at a few inches distance between the eye and a remote object, suppose a tree at half a mile distance, the tree will appear confused and indistinct when the attention is fixed on the hair, and the same will be the case with the hair when the attention is fixed on the distant tree.

There are some eyes naturally so defective, that they cannot effect this adjustment. Those which are replete with humours have the cornea and crystalline too convex, so that the pencils come to their foci before their arrival at the retina, where they fall in small circular spaces instead of points, and by their interference, render the image confused: on the other hand, if the humours be deficient in quantity, the cornea and crystalline are too flat, and the pencils of rays not being sufficiently refracted, arrive at the retina before their union in their foci; whence arises the same confusion in the image as in the former case. They whose eyes are imperfect in the first manner are called myopes, from their winking or closing their eyelids, but more commonly near sighted because they see very near objects distinctly, the divergency of the rays causing their foci to fall on the retina. They whose eyes are too flat are called presbytæ, because the imperfection of the sight of old men being occasioned by a decay of the humors is generally of this kind.

Both these imperfections may in a great measure be remedied by the use of proper spectacles. Since the rays converge too soon in the eyes of myopes, it is plain that a concave lens interposed between the object, and the eye will cause the rays to fall more divergent, and consequently will prevent their converging to a focus before their arrival at the retina. And the rays may be made to converge sooner in the eyes of presbytæ, by means of convex spectacles, so that they being already convergent when they enter the eye, will be sufficiently refracted by the cornea and crystalline to have their focus on the retina, and cause distinct vision.

These imperfections are much more frequently the consequences of habit than is generally imagined. Studious men are generally near-sighted, whereas sailors, sportsmen, and others, who are used to fix their attention on remote objects, are more subject to the contrary defect. The eyes of old men have another defect, namely, rigidity, or a want of the power of adjustment, so that it often happens that they require concaves for distant and convex lenses for near objects, being capable only of seeing objects distinctly with the naked eye that are at a moderate distance. Every one should avoid the use of spectacles as much as possible, for though they render vision more distinct, yet, they never fail to increase the defect of the eye, so as in time to render it almost impossible to see without them with any degree of distinctness.

The eyes of various animals are accommodated with great skill to the exigences of their situation. In fishes the cornea is almost flat, that it may be no obstacle to their speed in the water, but this is compensated by the crystalline, which is spherical, and therefore adapted to perform the whole necessary refraction of the rays. And in cats and some other animals that prey in the dark, the pupil of the eye is so variable as to admit more than an hundred times the quantity of light at one time than another. The human eye admits more than ten times the quantity of light at one time than at another, and perhaps the differences may be much greater in very dark places: it is not impossible but that the iris may then be almost intirely drawn back, and the pupil expanded to the whole surface of the cornea.

Nicholson's Nat. Philosophy.

Selected for the Evening Fire side.

Conduct me, thou of beings cause divine,
Where'er I'm destin'd in thy great design!
Active, I follow on; for should my will
Resist, I'm impious; but must follow still.

HARRIS.

Bozaldab, caliph of Egypt, had dwelt securely for many years in the silken pavilions of pleasure, and had every morning anointed his head with the oil of gladness, when his only son Aboram, for whom he had crowded his treasuries with gold, extended his dominions with conquests, and secured them with impregnable fortresses, was suddenly wounded, as he was hunting, with an arrow from an unknown hand, and expired in the field.

Bozaldab, in the distraction of grief and despair, refused to return to his palace, and retired to the gloomiest grotto in the neighbouring mountain: he there rolled himself on the dust, tore away the hairs of his hoary beard, and dashed the cup of consolation that patience offered him to the ground. He suffered not his minstrels to approach his presence; but listened to the screams of the melancholy birds of midnight, that flirt through the solitary vaults and echoing chambers of the pyramids. "Can that God be benevolent," he cried, "who thus wounds the soul, as from an ambush, with unexpected sorrows, and crushes his creatures in a moment with irremediable calamity? Ye lying Imans, prate to us no more of the justice and the kindness of an all-directing and all-loving Providence! He, whom ye pretend reigns in heaven, is so far from protecting the miserable sons of men, that he perpetually delights to blast the sweetest flowerets in the garden of Hope: and, like a malignant giant, to beat down the strongest towers of Happiness with the iron mace of his anger. If this Being possessed the goodness and the power with which flattering priests have invested him, he would doubtless be inclined, and enabled to banish those evils which render the world a dungeon of distress, a vale of vanity and woe.—I will continue in it no longer!"

At that moment he furiously raised his hand, which Despair had armed with a dagger, to strike deep into his bosom; when suddenly thick flashes of lightning shot through the cavern, and a being of more than human beauty and magnitude, arrayed in azure robes, crowned with amaranth, and waving a branch of palm in his right hand, arrested the arm of the trembling and astonished caliph, and said with a majestic smile, "follow me to the top of this mountain."

"Look from hence," ſaid the awful conductor; "I am Caloc, the angel of peace; look from hence into the valley."

Bozaldab opened his eyes and beheld a barren, a ſultry, and ſolitary iſland, in the midſt of which ſat a pale, meagre, and ghaſtly figure: it was a merchant juſt periſhing with famine, and lamenting that he could find neither wild berries, nor a ſingle ſpring in this forlorn deſert; and begging the protection of Heaven againſt the tigers that would now certainly deſtroy him, ſince he had conſumed the laſt fuel he had collected to make nightly fires to affright them. He then caſt a caſket of jewels on the ſand, as trifles of no uſe; and crept, feeble and trembling, to an eminence, where he was accuſtomed to ſit every evening to watch the ſetting ſun, and to give a ſignal to any ſhip that might haply approach the iſland.

"Inhabitant of heaven," cried Bozaldab, "ſuffer not this wretch to periſh by the fury of wild beaſts." "Peace," ſaid the angel, "and obſerve."

He looked again, and behold a veſſel arrived at the deſolate iſle. What words can paint the rapture of the ſtarving merchant, when the captain offered to tranſport him to his native country, if he would reward him with half the jewels in his caſket? No ſooner had this pitileſs commander received the ſtipulated ſum, than he held a conſultation with his crew, and they agreed to ſeize the remaining jewels, and leave the unhappy exile in the ſame helpleſs and lamentable condition in which they diſcovered him. He wept and trembled, intreated and implored in vain.

"Will heaven permit ſuch injuſtice to be practiſed?" exclaimed Bozaldab.—"Look again, ſaid the angel, and behold the very ſhip in which, ſhort-ſighted as thou art, thou wiſhedſt the merchant might embark, daſhed in pieces on a rock; doſt thou not hear the cries of the ſinking ſailors? Preſume not to direct the Governor of the univerſe in his diſpoſal of events. The man whom thou haſt pitied ſhall be taken from this dreary ſolitude, but not by the method thou would preſcribe. His vice was avarice, by which he became not only abominable, but wretched; he fancied ſome mighty charm in wealth, which, like the wand of Abdiel, would gratify every wiſh and obviate every fear. This wealth he has now been taught not only to deſpiſe but abhor: he caſt his jewels upon the ſand, and confeſſed them to be uſeleſs; he offered part of them to the mariner, and perceived them to be pernicious: he has now learnt, that they are rendered uſeful or vain, good or evil, only by the ſituation and temper of the poſſeſſor. Happy is he whom diſtreſs has taught wiſdom! But turn thine eyes to another and more intereſting ſcene."

The caliph inſtantly beheld a magnificent palace, adorned with the ſtatues of his anceſtors wrought in jaſper; the ivory doors of which, turning on hinges of the gold of Golconda, diſcovered a throne of diamonds, ſurrounded with the rajas of fifty nations, and ambaſſadors of various habits, and different complexions; on which ſat Aboram, the much-lamented ſon of Bozaldab, and by his ſide a princeſs fairer than a Houri.

"Gracious Alla!—it is my ſon," cried the Caliph—O, let me hold him to my heart!" "Thou canſt not graſp an unſubſtantial viſion," replied the angel: "I am now ſhewing thee what would have been the deſtiny of thy ſon, had he continued longer on the earth." "And why," returned Bozaldab, "was he not permitted to continue? Why was not I ſuffered to be a witneſs of ſo much felicity and power?" "Conſider the ſequel," replied he that dwells in the fifth heaven. Bozaldab looked earneſtly, and ſaw the countenance of his ſon, on which he had been uſed to behold the placid ſmile of ſimplicity and the vivid bluſhes of health, now diſtorted with rage, and now fixed in the inſenſibility of drunkenneſs: it was again animated with diſdain, it became pale with apprehenſion, and appeared to be withered by intemperance; his hands were ſtained with blood, and he trembled by turns with fury and terror: the palace ſo lately ſhining with oriental pomp, changed ſuddenly into the cell of a dungeon, where his ſon lay ſtretched out on the cold pavement, gagged and bound, with his eyes put out. Soon after he perceived the favourite ſultana, who before was ſeated by his ſide, enter with a bowl of poiſon, which ſhe compelled Aboram to drink, and afterwards married the ſucceſſor to his throne.

"Happy," ſaid Caloc, "is he whom Providence has by the angel of death ſnatched from guilt! from whom that power is withheld, which, if he had poſſeſſed, would have accumulated upon himſelf yet greater miſery than it could bring upon others."

"It is enough," cried Bozaldab; "I adore the inſcrutable ſchemes of Omniſcience!—From what dreadful evil has my ſon been reſcued by a death, which I raſhly bewailed as unfortunate and premature; a death of innocence and peace, which has bleſſed his memory upon earth, and tranſmitted his ſoul above the ſkies!"

"Caſt away the dagger," replied the heavenly meſſenger, "which thou waſt preparing to plunge into thine own heart. Exchange complaint for ſilence, and doubt for adoration. Can a mortal look down, without giddineſs and ſtupefaction, into the vaſt abyſs of Eternal Wiſdom? Can a mind that ſees not infinitely, perfectly comprehend any thing among an infinity of objects mutually relative? Can the channels, which thou haſt cut to receive the annual inundations of the Nile, contain the water of the Ocean? Remember, that perfect happineſs cannot be conferred on a creature; for perfect happineſs is an attribute as incommunicable as perfect power and eternity."

The angel, while he was ſpeaking thus, ſtretched out his pinions to fly back to the Empyreum; and the flutter of his wings was like the ruſhing of a cataract.

[*Adventurer.*]

ELEGY.

Haste, haste, ye solemn messengers of night,
Spread the black mantle on the shrinking plain;
But, ah! my torments still survive the light,
The changing seasons alter not my pain.

Ye variegated children of the spring;
Ye blossoms blushing with the pearly dew;
Ye birds that sweetly in the hawthorn sing;
Ye flow'ry meadows, lawns of verdant hue,

Faint are your colours; harsh your love-notes thrill
To me no pleasure nature now can yield:
Alike the barren rock and woody hill,
The dark-brown blasted heath, and fruitful field.

Ye spouting cataracts, ye silver streams;
Ye spacious rivers, whom the willow shrouds;
Ascend the bright-crown'd sun's far shining beams,
To aid the mournful tear-distilling clouds.

Ye noxious vapours, fall upon my head;
Ye writhing adders, round my feet entwine;
Ye toads, your venom in my footpath spread;
Ye blasting meteors upon me shine.

Ye circling seasons, intercept the year;
Forbid the beauties of the spring to rise;
Let not the life-preserving grain appear;
Let howling tempests harrow up the skies.

Ye cloud-girt, moss-grown turrets, look no more
Into the palace of the god of day:
Ye loud tempestuous billows, cease to roar,
In plaintive numbers, through the valley stray.

Ye verdant-vested trees, forget to grow,
Cast off the yellow foliage of your pride:
Ye softly tinkling riv'lets, cease to flow,
Or swell'd with certain death and poison, glide.

Ye solemn warblers of the gloomy night,
That rest in lightning blasted oaks the day,
Thro' the black mantles take your slow-pac'd flight,
Rending the silent wood with shrieking lay.

e snow-crown'd mountains, lost to mortal eyes,
Down to the valley bend your hoary head
e livid comets, fire the peopled skies
For —— lady Betty's tabby cat is dead!!!

I.

Nature her own Surgeon: a curious case of a Compound Fracture, related by Dr. Hunter, at his lectures.

Speaking of the nature and cure of simple and compound fractures, Dr. Hunter obſerved in his lectures, that, in treating the compound, many ſurgeons did miſchief and irritated the wound, by their officious and artificial manner of dreſſing it. Inſtead of that practice, he recommended treating the compound, as much as poſſible, in the ſame way as the ſimple fracture; and in confirmation of that practice, uſed to relate the following ſingular caſe, which was always heard with great attention, becauſe the inſtruction was conveyed in the way of pleaſantry.

"A maniacal patient, Mr. G——, who was confined in the infirmary at Edinburgh (he ſays it was about 30 years ago) ſeeming to have recovered a calm and rational ſtate of mind, was allowed to take an airing in the garden by himſelf. Here he took the reſolution of making his eſcape, and got over the garden wall. In dropping himſelf from the wall which was very high, he pulled a large cap-ſtone along with him, and ſuffered a very large compound fracture in his leg. He was carried round, and lodged again in the infirmary, in this unhappy condition; and the ſurgeon, who was inſtantly brought to him, ſet the leg, dreſſed the wound, applied the 18 tailed bandage, &c. in the uſual way. After all this, the patient appearing to be very calm, the ſurgeon gave ſome proper directions, went away, and the patient was left alone to get ſome reſt, which was thought proper, and ſeemed to be his own deſire. His madneſs now took a ſingular whimſical turn; he knew very well that he had got a miſerable broken leg: but his crazy imagination made him believe, that the ſurgeon had miſtaken his leg, had beſtowed all his cunning upon the ſound leg, which required no attention, and had left the ſhattered limb to ſhift for itſelf. Under this firm perſuaſion, convinced that his ſurgeon was too ignorant to perceive his blunder, and too conceited to be ſet right, and too proud to ſuffer ſuch humiliation, he thought it would be moſt prudent, in his preſent ſtate of ſubjection, for the cure of his broken leg, to make the beſt uſe he could of the dexterity which God had given him. He removed all the apparatus from the broken leg, with great attention, that he might be able to apply it to the other leg, ſo exactly in the ſame manner, that the ſurgeon ſhould not be able to diſcover the alteration, and leſt any ſuſpicion ſhould ariſe, and lead to an enquiry and diſcovery, he thought he ſhould be ſtill more ſecure by ſecreting, or hiding the other leg, that it might not be found, and appear an evidence againſt him, he therefore tore a large hole in the ſheet and feather-bed, and buried the wounded leg among the feathers.

Next day when the ſurgeon viſited him, he ſaid, that for a while, he had been in pain, but, that by a fortunate and accidental motion of the foot, the pain went off as by a charm: that he had continued perfectly eaſy ever ſince, and therefore was reſolved to keep it as ſteady as poſſible in the ſame ſituation. The ſurgeon finding him eaſy, the pulſe quiet, and no ſymptom whatever of fever, went to the foot of the bed, and lifting up the clothes, ſaid, "let us juſt ſee how the foot and leg looks." The patient ſeemed much alarmed with the propoſal, and intreated him for mercy's ſake to deſiſt; becauſe, ſaid he, the leaſt motion in the world would diſturb it, and bring all his pains back again. The ſurgeon aſſured him that the bed-clothes touched nothing but the cradle, and that the lifting of them up, could not in the leaſt move either the leg or foot; and then obſerving to the ſtudents, that the appearance of the foot was as favourable as he could wiſh, he expreſſed his ſatisfaction, and went away.

Every day's viſit after this turned out equally ſatisfactory, both to the ſurgeon and patient, till the fifth or ſixth day, when the ſurgeon grew very anxious to ſee the wound, leaſt any lurking miſchief ſhould be concealed, and was determined to remove the dreſſing. This the patient reſiſted, firſt with prayers, and then with imprecations, &c. but at laſt he was obliged to ſubmit. The ſurgeon, with a cautious and tender hand, removed the bandages; and as he went on, expreſſed the pleaſure which he felt on ſeeing the ſkin, both above and below the wound in ſo natural a condition. At length he lifted up the dreſſiings, which he found were quite looſe, and ſeeing a leg now perfectly ſound, which a few days before he had ſeen in ſuch a lamentable ſtate, you can better conceive than I can tell how he looked. After a ſhort pauſe, he paſſed his fingers along the tibia, and then ſaid, "I only know that a fracture and wound there certainly was, and now there is certainly neither." Preſently he recovered himſelf enough to recollect that it was the other leg which he had ſet and dreſſed, and ſaid, "Where is the other leg?" (turning off the bed-cloaths at the ſame time. Lunatics are quick in reſources, and not eaſily put out of countenance, and imagine that nobody can doubt what they aſſert. Mr. G——, ſenſible now that the leg would be diſcovered, drew it out from among the feathers, ſaying, with great reſentment and rage, that he would now expoſe the ſurgeon's ignorance to the world; that he always knew ſurgeons to be a ſet of ignorant fellows, though they wore large wigs, and now he would prove it, by a ſhocking inſtance, to the ſatisfaction of all preſent.

This leg, ſaid he, holding out the broken leg, with a cake of blood and feathers cruſted over and round the wound) this leg, thank God! is as ſound as any man's; there, (pointing to the other) is the broken leg: you ſee what a condition it is in: and that fellow being called, did nothing for it: he was called to ſet a broken leg, and bound up this. After venting ſome more of his indignation and rage in ſarcaſtic and coarſe language, begged that ſome of the young ſurgeons would bind up his broken leg again (meaning the ſound one) for that it was in great pain, was much diſturbed with this impertinent examination, and, if not taken care of, would make him a miſerable object, at beſt a cripple for life.

The ſurgeon ſeeing his patient's imagination ſo ſtrongly perverted, and being convinced by the agitation which that miſapprehenſion had raiſed, that it would be, upon the whole, ſafer to indulge him in this wild conceit, with humanity as well as good ſenſe, deſired the young men to humour him, by putting the apparatus on the ſound leg. From that time he was calm, and in all other things reaſonable. The cure went on with perfect ſucceſs; the ſcab at laſt dropped off; the wound was then found to be healed, and the calous completed. A memorable leſſon for ſurgeons, and a ſtriking inſtance of the weakneſs of human reaſon, of the imperfection of our boaſted art, and the power of nature!

SUMMARY OF INTELLIGENCE.

FOREIGN.—*London, April* 29.—The British minister at Berlin has demanded and obtained his passports, He was expected at Husum, before the end of this month, on his way to England.

The obstruction of the trade of Hamburgh, in consequence of the measures lately adopted, is most severely felt; English goods have of course greatly advanced in price; and a general dissatisfaction prevails among every description of people.

The order for blockading the Weser, the Elbe, and other rivers of Germany, was not known at Hamburgh until Tuesday last; it created the utmost consternation. An opinion prevailed there, that Prussia would be compelled by France to declare against Denmark, in case of refusal of the latter to shut her ports against the trade of this country.

It will appear, from the Declaration inserted in our paper of this day, that the king of Sweden, not in the least alarmed by the movements of Prussian troops, or the menaces of the Prussian cabinet, is resolved not to retire from that part of the Electorate of Hanover on the right bank on the Elbe.

Dumourier is at present in Sweedish Pomerania.

It should seem as if the renewal of war upon the Continent were almost impossible to be avoided. It is clear, notwithstanding the belief which Bonaparte professes to entertain, that Austria will cause Castle Nuovo and the Mouths of the Cattaro to be delivered up to him, that he suspects the surrender of them to Russia to have been the effect of connivance between the two courts. It is said, that in addition to the permission to march French troops into Dalmatia through the Frioul, he will demand the co-operation of the Austrian troops with his own to drive the Russians from the places they occupy. In such a demand Austria cannot, of course, acquiesce, and her refusal will be the signal for the recommencement of hostilities;—for well are we persuaded that Bonaparte, now that he is sure of Prussia, is anxious for a renewal of the war with Austria.—It is said that the French troops are approaching the Inn, and that a camp is to be formed near Brannau.

In the event of a renewal of war upon the Continent, the theatre of hostilities will be much larger than it was during the last short contest. It will extend from the north of Germany to Dalmatia—it may even extend to the Turkish provinces, and the fate of Christian Europe may be decided upon the territories of the followers of Mahomet.

Important.—Letters, dated Liverpool, April 29th, to a respectable mercantile house in New-York, state, that Denmark will remain neutral; and that, at that time there was no appearance of any thing which could interrupt the good understanding then subsisting between Denmark and Great-Britain.

The following articles were copied from a late London paper.

The Stadtholder departed this life on the 8th inst. at Brunswick, in the 58th year of his age. His successor in the Government of the Principality of Nassau Orange is the hereditary and reigning Prince of Fulda.

Letters from Hamburgh state, that every thing had all along been quiet there, and business going on as usual, nor had they any apprehensions of a foreign force taking possession of their city. To the 30,000 troops which the King of Denmark had already stationed along the North Bank of the Elbe, he was marching down a similar force, determined to maintain his neutrality.

Our harbour is nearly full of detained vessels, and if the wind becomes westerly, as it seems inclined to do, we most likely shall have many more from the westward, for our numerous cruizers let nothing pass without examination.

The following account of "a chicken with a human countenance," is copied from the London Monthly Magazine.

A short time since, a Jew exhibited for money at Posen, in South Prussia, a chicken with a human countenance. This chicken was hatched on an estate near Wreschen (*Pol.* Wrzesnia) in the district of Posen; and the Jew had accepted of it as an equivalent for a small taylors bill due to him by the owner of the estate, who asserted, that another similar formed chicken had been at the same time hatched by the same hen, but soon died. The chicken which was shewn by the Jew survived, and had a very lively appearance, was full grown, and above a year old. The body was covered with variegated feathers, and, as far as the part of the neck where the head begins, in no respect distinguished by any singularity from other chickens; but it was without feathers, and covered with a skin of a somewhat bluish colour. The sockets of the eyes were shaped exactly as in a human countenance, and over them two arches of very fine down formed regular eyebrows. The upper part of the bill was so bent and blunted as to form a well shaped nose, except that it was of a horny substance. Under the nose a regular human mouth, with lips, and two rows of closely united white pointed teeth completed this singular *lusus naturæ*. The tongue was round and shaped like a human being on a diminutive scale, that to discover it there was not the least occasion to call in the aid of the imagination. The above account of this phenomenon was signed and published by M. Schwatz, a gentleman, holding a respectable office under the Prussian government at Posen.

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Domestic.—*Miranda.*—A report was in circulation at Barbadoes, when the Urania [arrived at New-York] left there, that the Province of Caraccas had declared in favour of General Miranda.

Schr. Henrietta, Pearson, arrived at Baltimore on Tuesday, from Curracoa, whence she sailed the 20th May. By her we learn, that the various reports in circulation there respecting *Miranda*, kept the public mind in constant agitation and suspence, without giving the least shadow of certainty to any of his operations. It was generally believed that if he had acted with more vigour and perseverance at first, his expedition might have been attended with success; but that owing to his wasting a great part of his time in useless and unnecessary manœvers, together with his long stay at Jacquemel, he gave the Spaniards sufficient time to become acquainted with his hostile intentions, and to put themselves in a proper state of defence against any attacks he could make, by filling every place in the least liable to invasion with troops—by apprehending those who appeared to favour him, and have them properly secured or removed from the coast, and finally by sending vessels in search of him.

There was no certain account of the capture of Miranda's two schooners, and many believed the report only raised by government to lull the fears of the people

Balt. Tel.

To remove and keep clear of Bed-bugs.

Aloes of the Succotrina kind, to be had from most druggists and apothecaries dissolved in any kind of spirit to the consistence which may be applied to the joints and crevices of the bedsteads, or elsewhere, with a feather, will certainly kill and remove them. About an ounce of aloes, in a gill of spirit will clear several bedsteads, and the cost but a few cents. It is a good method to mark the breadth of a finger with the solution round each foot of the bed-posts.

[*Baltimore Gazette.*]

Interments in the different burial grounds of the City and Liberties of Philadelphia—from June the 7th to the 14th, Adults 21—Children 20—Total 41.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

M. assures us that her piece is original—we are not disposed to dispute her claim—but it wants poetic merit to entitle it to a place in the Fire-side.

We give E. credit for his laudable desire to let his light shine before men, but his lamp wants trimming and replenishing before it will emit a vivid ray.

Grey-hairs we believe to be in his dotage.

Ruminator is under consideration.

Probe is received and intended for our next.

PUBLISHED BY JOSEPH RAKESTRAW,
NO. 84, NORTH FRONT-STREET,
Where Subscriptions and Communications (post paid) *will be received.*
Subscriptions will also be received at Benjamin Johnson's *Book-Store, No. 249, Market Street, Philadelphia, and by*
Samuel Wood, *362, Pearl-street, N. York.*